Oliver Stone replies to Sen. Specter

A few comments on Arlen Specter's "facts" (Commentary Page, Jan. 5):

• The entry wound in the head of President John F. Kennedy. In Dallas, it was very clear and simple; since, the wound could be best described as transient. As six Parkland Hospital doctors told the Warren Commission, the "right posterior portion of the skull had been blasted" from a "gunshot wound to the temple." At the Bethesda military autopsy, the entry wound moved down and backward, ending up near the base of the skull. Fourteen years later at the House Select Committee on Assassinations, the wound moved again, this time to a position *four inches higher* in the back of the head, as indicated by the official autopsy photos and X-rays.

• Lt. Col. Pierre Finck. Dr. Finck, one of the Bethesda autopsy doctors, did testify at the Garrison-Shaw trial. The lines in the film are verbatim from the court transcripts — Dr. Finck says he was ordered not to track the bullet through Kennedy's neck. The next entry and exit were the crucial first step in the single-bullet theory — if the bullet was not tracked, how do we know it exited Kennedy's body?

Chances are it did not. Two FBI reports by agents in attendance at the autopsy state that the bullet wound in the President's back (another itinerant wound that relocated to the back of the neck for the Warren report but returned to the upper back by 1977) was very shallow and the bullet had not exited at all, much less continued on through John Connally. These documents are included in the commission's material — why does Mr. Specter disregard them?

• Jack Ruby. The scene where Ruby talks to the Warren Commission comes straight out of commission Volume 5. Mr. Specter should know — he was at the interview.

• Acoustics tests. The National Academy of Sciences did its tests on a second-generation dub of the Dallas police Dictabelt, not the original, making the results invalid.

• Rifle and ballistics tests. Mr. Specter says the commission "conducted elaborate tests" to bolster its conclusions. He doesn't tell you the results. The tests were a disaster: World-class marksmen never equaled Lee Harvey Oswald's shooting success, even under easier conditions; test bullets were distorted and mangled despite causing only portions of the injury done by the intact magic bullet; even the scope on Oswald's rifle had to be adjusted for proper aim.

• Neutron activation analysis. Mr. Specter claims the commission did not have this technology available. It did, and the FBI conducted NAA tests on the magic bullet and various bullet fragments in 1964. According to a memo to the commission from J. Edgar Hoover, the tests were, at best, "inconclusive."

• The Connally wrist fragments. Although the results of the 1977 NAA tests indicated the fragments came from the magic bullet, the House committee could not prove that the fragments tested came from Connally's wrist — *the 1964 fragments had disappeared* from the Archives and the "new" fragments were of unknown origin. Both sets can't be from the magic bullet — their total weight exceeds the amount of metal missing from the bullet.

• As serious researchers know, there are 26 — not 25 — volumes of Warren Commission exhibits and hearings. Either Mr. Specter has an incomplete set, or he really is unfamiliar with the evidence.

Oliver Stone
Santa Monica, Calif.